1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

766 of by cutting it into pieces and burning it on a fire. The natives say that if this be done the 'blood' and the 'fat' of the dead man go up to the sky and this removes all danger to the living from the dead man. The blood of persons so burnt is seen in the sky at sunset. If a man were killed in a fight between two communities and his body remained with the enemy, they would dispose of it in this way. If the friends secured the body they would bury it in the usual way. It may be worthy of remark 766 that this custom of burning the bodies of slain enemies is 266 perhaps the real origin of the belief that the Andamanese are or were cannibals. We can well imagine that when, as must have often happened, sailors venturing to land on the islands have been killed and the survivors have seen the bodies of their companions cut up and placed on fires, they would readily conclude that they were witnessing a cannibal feast. There can be no doubt whatever that since the islands were occupied in 1858 the inhabitants have not practised cannibalism, and there is no good reason to suppose that they once followed the custom and then abandoned it.

764 The burial is conducted, if possible, on the day of the death. If it has to be deferred till the morrow all the inhabitants of the camp keep awake. The relatives sit round the corpse weeping at intervals, while some of the men take it in turn to sing songs during the hours of darkness. This, so they say, is to keep away the spirits that have caused the death, and so prevent them from further mischief. When a man or woman dies in the prime of [152] life after a short illness the friends and relatives often break out in anger which they express in different ways. A man will shout threats and curses at the spirits that he conceives to be responsible for the death of his friend. He may pick up his bow and discharge his arrows in all directions, or in some other way give expression to his angry feelings. On the occasion of a death in one of the *Akar-Bale* villages the relatives expressed their grief by cutting down a coconut tree that grew there.

765 The period of mourning for near relatives—parent, adult child, consort, brother or sister—lasts for several months. In the case of a young child only the parents mourn. The essentials

2: Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

2. I have used the word "evil" advisedly, for there can be no doubt, from observations extending over many years, that the result of their excessive indulgence in smoking has been seriously to impair their constitutions. The attempts that have been made to check the mischief have hitherto failed, as it has been found difficult, if not impossible, to induce them to do a stroke of work without the accompaniment of the "fragrant weed."

Cannibalism.—1. The early stories regarding the prevalence of cannibalism among these savages do not at the present day require refutation.[1] No lengthened investigation was needed to disprove the long credited fiction, for not a trace could be discovered of the existence of such a practice in their midst, even in far-off times.

2. It is curious, however, to note, that while they express the greatest horror of the custom, and indignantly deny that it ever held a place among their institutions, a very general belief has been entertained by the tribes living in South and Middle Andaman as to its prevalence in other races, and even among their own countrymen inhabiting North and Little Andaman; and to this cause is chiefly ascribed the dread which they and their fathers have, from a distant period, evinced of their neighbours, and the animosity displayed towards strangers who have approached or landed on their shores; but these sentiments are now confined to those individuals who have had but scant opportunity of becoming acquainted with ourselves and other aliens, or with the results of the visits paid by us to the dreaded *.yē·rewa-* and *.jār·awa-* territories.

Communications, Chirography, and Drawing.—1. The density of the Andaman jungles, and the unsuitability of their canoes for long expeditions by sea, would of themselves be serious hindrances to free intercourse between the various tribes, even were there not the further difficulty—due in great measure to the above circumstances—of difference of language to contend with.

2. There are no marked boundaries between the various tribal districts, but a general understanding exists between neighbouring tribes regarding the limits of their respective domains, which are usually defined by such natural barriers as a range of hills, a creek, or even a belt of dense jungle. So careful are they to respect these boundaries, that, before even travelling through, and particularly before hunting or fishing in, the territory of a

[1] Papuans being regarded as such inveterate anthropophagi, ethnologists will probably agree in considering that the non-existence—nay, even horror—of this custom among the Andamanese furnishes an important item in the array of facts which militate against the theory held by some that the latter form a branch of the great Papuan family.

2: Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

and captured when frequenting the shore, they never take advantage of the opportunities thus presented.

37. Even on the darkest nights many turtles are speared at the moment when they rise to the surface in order to breathe. The sound which they then make, though slight, is sufficient at once to attract the attention of the keen-eared *àryó·to-*[1] standing on the projecting prow, and to enable him to direct his harpoon with unerring aim; he usually jumps into the water after his victim, lest the barbed head should, in the act of dragging the line, slip out of the wound and the animal escape. When the turtle is in such deep water as to render spearing it from the canoe an impossibility, the harpooner leaps into the water feet foremost, with the spear in his hand, and frequently succeeds at once in transfixing the animal. After spearing a sting-ray, they drag it by means of the harpoon to the boat, whereupon one of the party seizes it by its tail, and holding it firmly between his *teeth*, knocks off, with a piece of wood or other instrument, the formidable spike or spikes which project from the root of the tail; after thus disarming their victim, they proceed to drag it into the canoe or to the shore.[2]

38. From the accounts of some writers respecting the prowess of the Andaman Islanders in the water, it might be inferred that they rival or even excel the "finny denizens of the deep" in their own element. This is, of course, incorrect, and due to misapprehension; the secret of their "invariably returning to the surface with some scaly prize" finds its explanation in the fact that they never think of diving[3] after a fish that has not been first transfixed (according to its size) by an arrow or harpoon.[4]

39. The art of fishing with a hook and line was unknown to, and has not found favour among them, as they are far more successful than ourselves in catching fish by their own methods,[5] which are as follow:—at low water the women and children with hand-nets capture such fish and shell-fish[6] as are left by the

[1] *Vide ante* "Tribal Communities," paragraph 5.

[2] Two or three fatal accidents have, to my knowledge, occurred in recent years on dark nights to inexperienced turtle-hunters at one or other of the homes, in consequence of their having plunged on to the back of one of these fish after harpooning it, mistaking their victim in the darkness for a turtle.

[3] "Should the fish be large some of those in the boat dive down, attacking the victim with knives and spears" (Day).

[4] They are, moreover, not in the habit of "diving for shell-fish"—except it be for a *Tridacna crocea*, which they occasionally discover in deep water—for quantities are always found in shallow water at low tide.

[5] "The present writer has seen a party of Andamanese shoot and secure nearly one hundred fish during one low tide on a coral reef, and that with no very extraordinary exertion" (*vide* "Bombay Gazette," 2nd August, 1881).

[6] The favourite time for collecting shell-fish is the low tide at daybreak occurring about the third and fourth days after new and full moon, and known to them by the name of *tó·ya-*.

3: Temple G-5 (1901) 1903 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

172 The largest and traditionally the oldest, the original, home of the race by a consensus of Andamanese opinion and worth scientific exploration (any other to be greatly deprecated), is the kitchen-midden of Wota-Emi on Baratang in Elphinstone Harbour on the east coast of the South Andaman.

In reference to the kitchen-middens it is worth noting that all Andamanese tradition commences with the cataclysm accompanied by a subsidence of a large portion of the surface of their old country already noticed, and the people point to certain ancient kitchen-middens, such as that at Port Mouat, on the sea level to prove it. They say that these were commenced by the survivors of the cataclysm and that the sites were previously high up on the mountain sides, where no one could build a kitchen-midden.

175 **Early Descriptions.**—I-Tsing, the Chinese Buddhist monk, in 672 A. D. (Takakasu's Ed. p. xxx) mixed up in his account of his travels the Andamanese with the Nicobarese, and describes them thus:—

"The men are entirely naked while the women veil their person with some leaves. If the merchants in joke offer them their clothes, they wave their hands (to tell that) they do not use them."

But the earliest distinct notice of the Andamanese is in that remarkable collection of early Arab notes on India and China (851 A. D.), which was translated by Eus. Renaudot and again in our own time by M. Reinaud. It accurately represents the view entertained of this people by mariners down to our own time.

175 •266 "The inhabitants of these islands eat men alive. They are black with woolly hair and in their eyes and countenances there is something quite frightful * * * they go naked and have no boats. If they had they would devour all who passed near them. Sometimes ships that are windbound and have exhausted their provision of water touch here and apply to the natives for it; in such cases the crews sometimes fall into the hands of the latter and most of them are massacred."

This traditional charge of cannibalism still persists, though it is now, and almost certainly has always been, entirely untrue. Of the massacre of shipwrecked crews up till quite recent times there is no doubt; but the policy of conciliation, which has been unremittingly pursued for the last forty years, has made the coasts quite safe for the shipwrecked, except at points where the Jarawas touch the coast and the wilder Onges reside, the south and west of Little Andaman, the North Sentinel Island, south of Rutland Island and Hut Bay on its western coast, Port Campbell and some few miles to the north of it on the west coast of the South Andaman. Everywhere else shipwrecked mariners would find the people not only friendly and helpful, but likely to give notice to Port Blair at once of their predicament.

[766] **Charge of Cannibalism.**—The charge of cannibalism seems to have arisen from three observations of the old mariners. The Andamanese attacked and murdered without provocation every stranger they could on his landing; they burnt his body (as they did in fact that of every enemy); and they had weird all-night dances round fires. Combine these three observations with the unprovoked murder of one of themselves and the fear aroused by such occurrences in a far land in ignorant mariners' minds, century after century, and a persistent charge of cannibalism is almost certain to be the result.

101 **Language of the Aka-Beada Tribe used in the Report.**—The tribe occupying the shores of the Harbour of Port Blair and its islands at the British occupation in 1858 was, in its own tongue, the Aka-Bea-da. Its language was the first to be studied and its customs the first to be ascertained. It may still be called the tribe that is the best known and understood.

Every tribe has its own name for itself and its neighbours, and it is therefore necessary for the purposes of this *Report* to adopt one set of names only throughout, and the set most convenient is naturally that of the Aka-Bea-da. In this language *aka* is a prefix with small variations to nearly all tribal names and *da* is a suffix used with almost every isolated noun. For the sake of brevity I have throughout this *Report* discarded both these affixes and used the roots only of tribal names. But it must be understood that in actual speech an Aka-Bea would, in answering such a question as "what is your tribe?", reply

6: Cipriani E-5 (1951-1953)1961 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

and therefore dangerous to offend by cooking them. Luckily they accepted fish of almost every description, and vegetables. To convince them of our good intentions concerning their food, at Port Blair an Onge observer was stationed permanently near the kitchen to watch the preparation of meals. Nevertheless, within a few days all 30 Onge fell ill as a consequence of the different food and climate. In their island they sleep, completely naked and uncovered, lying directly on beds made of rough branches. Their only precaution, as I mentioned before, is to keep a fire permanently burning close to the bed. This was not feasible in the rooms with wooden floors that were provided for them in Port Blair, and blankets did not avail. So the 30 Onge developed a fever and we were obliged to take them urgently back to Little Andaman, where they promptly recovered. The incident gave me a further opportunity to observe the curative methods of the Onge.

With regard to their care to avoid illness from food, I must point out the fact that misleading information has been published on the subject even in reputed papers on the Andamans. I will discuss them in my Onge book, but I wish here to briefly stress a few points: the Onge, and the present residual coastal or forest Andamanese, refuse to eat – besides birds and fish such as shark, ray, eel or muraenae – some other animals such as paradoxurus, bats, rats, varanus and snakes. The contrary is affirmed in those papers. To quote the well-known book by A. R. RADCLIFFE-BROWN ("The Andaman Islanders", pp. 37, 91 and 389), all Andaman Islanders, including the Onge, consider the above-mentioned species edible. Varanus is supposed to be acceptable for its lustful habits that make of it an aphrodisiac. My direct and protracted experience both in Little and in Great Andaman compels me to state that such information is false. It is true, however, that the Andaman Islanders believe they acquire some of the properties of their devoured victims. This occurs only if the animals are cut up alive. Therefore turtles, pigs and dugongs are cruelly sectioned while still alive, and the Onge also believe that their health and energy profit by it. Cannibalism may be founded on such beliefs, but it is completely unknown to Andaman Islanders of all times and places. Young sucking-pigs are avoided as food, by men, and even withheld from the dogs; but the Onge are partial to other things which, in our opinion, are far worse: crickets, and the fat larvae of coleoptera that collect in tree trunks.

Without giving here a full list of the foods that are considered harmful or curative, I shall add just a few remarks on the subject. The healthiest, as well as the tastiest part of the pig is supposed to be the kidney and its surrounding fat. It is offered to old or distinguished people, as a sign of favour. As I helped the Onge, as much as possible, with gifts of tools and medicines, they found it complimentary to name me after their favorite titbit, intending thereby to honour me as a friend and healer. By such a name I came to be known in Little Andaman, and this made my work easier. In the Onge language the word for kidney fat is *cue-changhēghē*; I was delighted with it, for it proclaimed the high esteem I was held in by my Onge friends.

Foods considered healthy by the Onge include honey, yams, several succulent roots and the fat of turtle and dugong. Pteropus, a giant bat very

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

kitchen-middens to have been contemporaneous with the introduction of the pig, i.e. to have been introduced by outsiders. It would be possible, using radio carbon methods, to calculate this date more accurately, but on purely archaeological evidence the introduction of pottery would appear to have occurred some five thousand years ago.

8 ABSENCE OF CANNIBALISM

If we may accept the evidence of the kitchen-middens, there has never at any time been cannibalism in the Andamans, although the practice certainly existed in the later Palaeolithic era; the Andamanese must thus have been isolated in the archipelago long before the practice became widespread.

9 DRINK

The Andamanese ignorance of any drink other than water may be regarded as additional evidence of the great antiquity of their culture.

10 ABSENCE OF CLOTHING

The Jarawas of both sexes have always remained completely naked. The Onges have only in comparatively recent times adopted a form of genital covering for their womenfolk; this custom has spread as far as the north of Great Andaman, and it seems probable that the separation of the Jarawas from the Onges dates from this time.

11 ABSENCE OF TATTOOING

All primitive peoples who are habitually completely naked adorn the body in some way. The Onges have never progressed beyond the early stage of painting themselves with ochre, and do not tattoo. Their sole ornaments are small necklaces of tusk shells, strips of bark, and sometimes flowers. In all this they resemble the Tasmans (see, however, p. 143 for certain important differences), who seem to have remained in an equally early stage of cultural development.

12 TOTEMISM AND THE CLAN

Here again the complete absence of any traces appears to indicate isolation before the spread of these very ancient concepts. Neither the Onges nor the Jarawas have ever progressed beyond the stage of independent groups of families.